



**Bradford on Avon
Town Council**



**LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD**

Minutes of the Full Council meeting of
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL held
on Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 7p.m in St. Margaret's Hall

Attendance – Town Council

Cllr K Bessant
Cllr S Blackwell
Cllr D Garwood
Cllr S Gibson
Cllr S McNeil-Ritchie
Cllr A Potter
Cllr T Trimble
Cllr K Vigar (Chairman)
Mr I Brown (Chief Executive & Town Clerk)
Ms S Howe (Committee Clerk)
Mr C Hogg (Green Spaces Officer)
Mr Matthew McLaughlin (Communications Officer)
Ms Sarah Hawkins (Accountant)

Members of the public: Jeremy Wire, Andrew Nicolson, Lisa Otter-Barry, Chris Humphries, Christian Sullivan, Richard Smith and 9 others

Apologies: Cllr E Franklin, Cllr A Kay, Cllr J Parker (Vice-Chairman), Cllr J Vittles

41. Declarations of interest - none

42. Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Trimble and seconded by Cllr Potter and with 7 in favour and 1 abstention it was **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 6th September 2022 were accepted as a true record.

43. Matters arising – none

44. Chairman's report

The Chairman report is attached to these minutes. The Chair highlighted the following:

- It had been an honour to lead the commemorations of the late Queen Elizabeth II and proclaim the new King Charles III.
- Cllr Parker along with the Green Spaces Officer had attended the South West in Bloom presentations where the town had received a Silver Gilt award. Feedback had been given by the South West in Bloom organisers and those involved in the town now look forward to next year and a chance to implement the suggestions.
- Cllr Vigar attended the Lions 52nd Charter lunch on Sunday 6th November. She praised the organisation for all the work they do across the town raising money and to commemorate their half-century anniversary the Lions are paying for a substantial number of trees to be planted along the river in the country park.
- Cllr Vigar has received a gift for the Town Council from the Mayor of Tubas following a visit by the Friends of Palestine. Cllr Vigar thanked him and the people of Tubas. She plans to write a thank you letter on behalf of the council.

- It is Remembrance Sunday this weekend and the War Memorial and the Canadian War plaque have both been restored and refurbished in time for this year's commemorations. Cllr Vigar thanked Cllr McNeil-Ritchie for his work on the restoration project.

45. Minutes of Committees

The minutes of the following committees were noted:-

27.09.22 Sustainable Travel Committee and 04.10.22 Environment & Green Spaces.

46. Traffic Consultation

Cllr Tim Trimble referred to his Report which is attached to these minutes. Following on from the report, we are still awaiting the answers to the questions asked by Cllr Vigar of Cllr Dr McClelland of Wiltshire Council, letter dated 25th October 2022, meanwhile our MP has been contacted and Michelle Donelan's Office has responded to a request from the council for a meeting with some proposed dates in December to include town councillors, our MP and Dr McClelland from whom we also await a response. As Wiltshire Council are now suggesting the town council makes a contribution to the traffic modelling costs, the town council believes it should have input into the models as the council knows the town better than Wiltshire highways engineers and understands the results from the traffic consultation. The Chair confirmed with Cllr Trimble that the council needs the answers to the questions of the letter dated 25th October 2022 before anything further can be agreed, especially additional funding. Cllr McNeil-Ritchie commented that he understood the core objectives from the traffic consultation were (i) pedestrian and cyclist safety, (ii) improved air quality and (iii) reduced traffic volumes so why do we think that the current suggestion that the modelling of a one-way system, to address these objectives, which excludes large parts of the town, and where the council is being led by the nose by Wiltshire Council and their traffic engineers, is the answer. Cllr Gibson commented that WC engineers generally only concern themselves with traffic movement and so the town's core objectives are not particularly recognised despite a huge resident mandate. WC appear to think one-way working in some central areas of town are essential and sought agreement from the council that they would support exploring this idea. Cllr McNeil-Ritchie continued that asking WC for the best solution to which the council can consider and respond would be the best way forward as he is concerned WC is too focused on the one-way suggestion. Cllr Trimble confirmed that the town council did not recommend a one-way system as the best approach at the expense of the core objectives but were forced by WC to come up with suggestions and the traffic consultation suggested some one-way working was popular with residents. Concerns were expressed that the scope of the project has shrunk down to modelling a section of town when the town council asked for modelling across the whole town, but this was what Wiltshire Council were willing to look at.

47. Skate Park Update

Cllr Bessant began by thanking Ms Mars for all her help and involvement with the skate park project to raise funds for a new skate park to replace the lately decommissioned facility in Poulton fields. Ms Mars provided the Council with an update via a short film and PowerPoint presentation. A skate park working group was formed and together with wider community involvement raised funds to provide a new space for young people to get active, meet new people, skate and scoot. Since July 2022 the working group has set itself a target of raising around a further £60k to reach a £250k overall target by the end of 2022. Fundraising is still ongoing although the finish line is now in sight. Alongside the fundraising the town council is now in the process of setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to access funds it couldn't directly. Throughout the campaign there has been much local public support both in general interest via social media and with help raising money such as a sponsored walk which raised £2000 and involved over 80 young people. Cllr Garwood commented that overall there had been an amazing local response to the campaign with the community contributing generously. It was suggested that the PowerPoint presentation, which is to be

shared on BoASkate.org the campaigns website, following the council meeting, should also have a link on the town council website. All agreed that the effort put into the fundraising from the community, grant applications, commerce and the council should be recognised and highlighted on all necessary websites and in social media.

48. Warm Spaces

The Chair read out to the council an update provided by Cllr Parker, in her absence, on the Warm Spaces initiative, set up in response to the cost-of-living crisis, winter energy crisis and ongoing isolation as a consequence of the pandemic. A working group has been established with Churches Together and other local groups and organisations such as the Co-op to allow the council to complement the activities/events such groups are planning to help those in need over the winter period. Following 3 meetings, a calendar of events has been published as a leaflet for distribution to interested parties and the details of which will now appear on the council's website. Further events will be added as they become available. Many churches are opening their halls as a warm space, some with activities laid on, also the library has confirmed its opening times and invited the public in to linger. The town council already organises a tea dance and dementia friendly films at St Margaret's Hall but is expanding the film programme to selected Sunday afternoons at minimal cost: £5 for families or £2 for individuals. Tea and biscuits will be served and a request for volunteers to help serve refreshments was made. Cllr Vigar thanked Cllr Parker for her considerable involvement in this initiative. Cllr Gibson reiterated that Wiltshire Area board has community funding available to any local groups and organisation who are already up and running with events and activities of a similar vein to the Warm Spaces initiative but would and could do more with a little more money.

49. Future Plans of the Twinning Associations

The Report written by Cllr Kay on the reorganisation of the German and French twinning committees is included in these minutes with the Chair highlighting concern over the resignation of members of the French twinning committee to such a degree that it looked like it might fold but volunteers have been found to replace them to the relief of all concerned. Cllr Neil-Ritchie wondered if a town in Ukraine could be twinned with BoA as a consequence of the relationship developed with the refugees who are staying here. Cllr Blackwell, who helped set up the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, offered to investigate this idea further with Elblag, in Poland, who are twinned with a town in West Ukraine.

50. Next meeting

Next meeting arranged for 10th January 2023.

51. Confidential business

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson and seconded by Cllr McNeil-Ritchie and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: to start confidential business.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Members of the public who spoke at the Council meeting on the 8th November 2022

1. Jeremy Wire –

Question 1: Item 6 Chairman's Report

It's Day 3 of COP27. This Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 and an Ecological Emergency in July 2020.

There's not much about these Emergencies in the Mayor's report, except that she went to some Big Green Week events on 25th September. And there's nothing anywhere else your agenda. People could be forgiven for thinking that you reckon they are done and dusted, and you've moved on.

You unanimously adopted a Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy in January 2021 Here are some of your commitments:

- The Council will look to allocate no less than 10% of its budget to items and projects directly addressing the joint Emergencies.
- The carbon and ecological footprint of the Council will be mapped.
- A review of procurement will be undertaken.
- Procurement and management practices will be consistent with the two declarations, and instructions will be drafted and delivered to Town Council suppliers. (That was going to happen by the end of July 2020, then early in the new year of 2021).

My question is, then: When will the Council be receiving its next report on its progress with the Strategy? Will you review the plan urgently, and please may we have a progress report at every Council meeting?

The Chair reiterated the council's commitment to its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. Of the 5 council committees, 2 are heavily focused in this area namely Environment and Green Spaces and Sustainable Travel which cover most of the updates. The Chairman's report is there to highlight all engagements not just those with a climate/ecological bias. On this agenda however there is sustainable travel item and in confidential business procurement which would fall within the sustainable remit. Cllr Gibson also stated that when this council formed in May 2021 it reaffirmed these commitments and that climate and ecological emergency thinking embeds every decision taken, every supplier, every procurement. The town is currently spending £60k on new trees to be planted around town, spending money on electric vehicles, contributed towards the Living wall and publicised the Domestic Heating Project to assist BoA residents. However perhaps more reporting to Full Council meetings was possible.

Question 2: Item 8 Traffic Update

It strikes me that Wiltshire Council are preparing the ground for backing out of any major expenditure on any traffic solution. I agree that any modelling costs should be borne by Wiltshire Council alone. And the retained money should be put into active travel schemes – to promote the town's priority outcomes of reduced traffic volumes, improved active travel safety and, better air quality.

I'm very concerned that the Update still says 'the best way forward would involve one-way working on some roads' (plural). Whatever we do, the town will never be free of traffic congestion, because if we free up road space it will be taken up by fresh traffic. A large one-way system will create patches of dangerous, fast moving traffic, alternating with tailbacks in all the wrong places. The finger of blame for that will point to the easiest targets- cyclists and walkers.

Q: What measures are you prepared to consider to restrain the volume and speed of traffic coming through this town and manage the locations of traffic congestion so that people walking, cycling or wheeling will be free of the fear of conflict, a crucial barrier to encouraging Active Travel?

The Chairman confirmed that the town council has not given up on a traffic solution and has contact our MP to attend a meeting with town and Wiltshire councillors. Cllr Trimble

confirmed that he does not believe that if a proposed one-way system frees up road space that it will definitely be taken up with fresh traffic or that to improve road safety a one-way system would prevent that from taking place. He stated that modelling will help set up different scenarios where the engineers can see what happens when various mitigations are tested. Models can also assist with pedestrian and cyclist safety.

2. Andrew Nicolson – Question regarding item 8 Traffic Update, he is not looking for an immediate answer but hopes councillors can think about his question and comment during item 8 after the Traffic update has been introduced. We are seeing Wiltshire Council's attitude for spending money on study options for our traffic (he's very happy the public can see all the letters and updates the town council has supplied) it's not so well known that the programme for local walking and cycling improvement plans aka LCWHIPS? Originally had it's plan for getting BOA underway in 2023 and this has been pushed back to 2024. Meanwhile we are all waiting for the improvements in walking and cycling around the town. If this is going to be part of a plan, that plan is a LCWHIP by another name, so what would councillors think of a proposal for the town to get together in some way eg, workshops or whatever will work best, and start to initiate and lead on the sorts of things we want to see: improving conditions for walking in the centre, in the through roads and in the residential areas so that when WC gets down to the LCWHIP it's based on local knowledge, needs and wishes.

3. Christian Sullivan – Question regarding Item 8: Traffic update.

I have noticed that you have reprioritised a few things which were a few votes(?) different, but my understanding was the priority which came from the Consultation was the reduction in traffic volume as being top of the list, followed by pedestrian and cyclist safety and air quality and my concern is and with WC backpedalling a little bit on whether or not they are going to pay for modelling we are just hoping we are not going to get a watered down modelling version based on something more simplistic or what might be a county wide affair to look at traffic volumes. I don't want any watering down particularly if funding becomes an issue.

Cllr Trimble stated that the figure of £50k to be spent on modelling was aired around June 2022 and the TC confirmed that the council did not wish to contribute to that expense, that it was WC's remit to pay for modelling. WC then reviewed what the scope of modelling should be, and examined reducing the scope. But Cllr Trimble believes WC felt on reflection that the full modelling process was required, so no watering down and if the funding can be agreed it will be a comprehensive treatment. Cllr Trimble also confirmed that reducing traffic volumes was still in the top three priorities, but WC will not countenance a scheme which diverts traffic away from BoA creating congestion elsewhere, they would be planning to introduce measures which will help reduce traffic movement within the town. Cllr Gibson followed up confirming that it would never be acceptable to reduce traffic volumes in BOA by causing worse jams elsewhere such as Staverton and that the overall plan with WC has been for a long time to reduce long distance traffic through the town by introducing mitigations in town leading to diversions along the A350 and not onto neighbouring town's roads.

4. FROBAW statement and question Lisa Otter-Barry

As you know there has been a year-long dispute between the town council and major stakeholders the Friends of Becky Addy Wood, very distressing and time consuming for all concerned, about the management of the TPO trees in Becky Addy Woodland.

We have now had an extraordinary and unusual mediation offer: The senior advisor for Wiltshire, Wessex Area Team, at Natural England, the leading conservation protection body in the UK, has generously offered to mediate between the two parties.

This comes at a time when we believe there is a good chance of success for mediation because Public Safety is no longer the main issue at stake – since the trees which the

council's surveyor had rated as posing a safety risk (Red and Amber rated on their schedule – what they term Emergency works) have now been dealt with.

The council have rated the remaining trees yellow or green which means that they themselves have rated the risks they pose as tolerable according to HSE criteria, and that further felling is unnecessary. What's more: if the council's vast over-estimate of footfall in the woods is corrected, the risk rating for all the trees becomes lower still – all remaining trees are then rated green.

(The council's surveyor has estimated that between 192 and 1,728 people pass along the woodland footpath every day of the year. The true figure as established by FROBAW who did a footfall count over 6 weeks in May and June 2022 is 46 people per 24 hours) The above means our respective approaches to the wood's management are getting closer – giving hope for mediation.

Question: FROBAW have indicated to Natural England our willingness to participate. Will councillors please agree to take part in this mediation process?

The Chair confirmed that the town council have carefully considered mediation when mentioned a few weeks ago and the council contacted the advisor at that point. The advisor took the view at that point that the measures we were taking were reasonable and mediation would not be a useful process. Since then FROBAW have been in touch again and said it still remains a possibility, so council has contacted him again this week and suggested a basis in which the council would be prepared to engage in discussions managed by him. At close of business today the council had not received a reply.

5. FROBAW statement and questions Chris Humphries

We urgently need to resolve our differences. FROBAW a major stakeholder must be treated as a partner as stipulated by a Memorandum of Understanding between FROBAW and TC dated April 2020. When FROBAW donated to the town council £30K of local people's money which they raised in 2020 to enable the council to buy Beck Addy Wood, this donation was conditional on a detailed written and signed Memorandum of Understanding stipulating joint decision making with regard to the management of Ash dieback and a jointly produced management plan. The TC contributed £7K plus £2 legal costs. We have still not seen a management plan and have not been involved in devising one. Moreover, FROBAW has been advised by a specialist tree risk assessment expert Ian Monger, who we commissioned to risk assess the trees for FROBAW in June and August 2022, that the works are not necessary. In fact three different tree experts – including Mr Monger and the council's own new tree surveyor now agree the risks are tolerable according to government HSE criteria, and that further felling is unnecessary.

Please would the town council explain how they view the April 2020 Memorandum of Understanding and their consequent obligations to FROBAW?

The Chair confirmed that the council take the situation seriously and the management plan became an Ash Dieback Management plan in November 2021 which was sent to FROBAW on a couple of occasions in November 2021 so that FROBAW could consult with FROBAW membership and come back to the town council. The council did wait for a response but did not receive one apart from individual responses on ash dieback. Cllr Gibson confirmed that the council officers were expecting a formal response from FROBAW to the plan but did not receive one and that such a response would still be gratefully received.

Next question: If winter felling/mono-lithing of trees in Becky Addy Wood took place as currently proposed, what would be the estimated total cost, including security costs, of both this felling and the summer tree works (19 trees)? The TC's May Tree Schedule indicates a further 58 trees (approx. 75 trunks because of multi-stemmed trees) are currently proposed either be felled or have their wildlife habitat severely reduced by monolithing) How have these costs and how will any further costs be met?

When does the council imagine that such works as are currently proposed would take place and how many days would such work entail?

The Chair confirmed that she does not know what the costs are yet as they, in all likelihood, have not been established and it was not accurate to say the council would be felling or reducing habitats by undertaking monolithing. Reducing height and weight of trees is to ensure trees are maintained in their position despite high winds and storms and therefore protecting habitats. The Chair confirmed she would respond further on the matter of costs in writing.

6. Carol Aldridge - Why is the Town Council considering using its limited funds to pay Wiltshire Council to model a one-way system, a device which research already shows is likely to draw in more traffic – directly contrary to our wishes to reduce traffic and emissions and to protect pedestrians across the town?

The Chair stated that as we have not received replies to our questions regarding the town council's letter to WC about contributing to modelling, the council cannot seriously consider whether it would contribute or not, despite the inclination not to, but councillors should have the opportunity to debate the issue with the correct information. Cllr Trimble confirmed that the point of modelling was not to introduce a one-way system, to allow traffic to speed through town, but to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce motorised traffic and improve air quality. Modelling is there to devise a system that meets our core objectives.

7. Richard Smith - Please could the chair provide an update from the Working party set up to consider the development of a river bridge for pedestrians in the town centre.

Cllr Trimble stated that there have been two meetings of the working party regarding a new pedestrian bridge. The initial meeting highlighted the need for professional technical help. The subsequent meeting involved a bridge engineer from WC and a lead conservation officer from WC. A third meeting is scheduled for next week. A resident of BOA with designing and managing experience is also likely to get involved. Additionally the working group plans to consult the public every step of the way.

Chairman's Report

Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Engagements

Friday 10th September - Along with Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jennie Parker, I placed a floral tribute in Millie's Garden to honour the life and service of HM Queen Elizabeth II. We both then signed the Book of Condolence in the Tourist Information Centre. This remained in the centre throughout the period of mourning and was signed by a large number of residents. An online version was also available.

Sunday 11th September - It was a great honour to read the Proclamation of King Charles III in Westbury Gardens alongside the Deputy Mayor and joined by Amanda Burnside, Deputy Lieutenant of Wiltshire, who we thank for attending. Other councillors were also present along with many residents of the town. I attended the church service at Holy Trinity in the morning.

Saturday 24th September – It was a pleasure to attend a charity wine tasting at the Swan Hotel in aid of Penny Brohn UK. This charity does tremendous work supporting those affected by cancer and their families. It was a very enjoyable evening, well supported by local businesses and raised almost £2000. My thanks to the organisers.

Sunday 25th September - I attended Holy Trinity's Harvest Festival service for Great Big Green Week in the morning and the Eco-Film Festival in the afternoon. Revd Canon Joanna Abecassis's sermon and the message of the films were important reminders that the climate emergency cannot be ignored. This was the start of over a week of fantastic events highlighting many aspects of the crisis in biodiversity and climate and my thanks go to all those who worked so hard to put them on.

Saturday 1st October – along with other councillors, I supported the Town Council stall at the Eco-fair which was an excellent event with many stalls of interest, including the fantastic Men's Shed apple pressing!

Wednesday 12th October – the Southwest in Bloom Presentation at Hazelberry Mill, near Crewkerne was attended by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jennie Parker along with Green Spaces Officer, Chris Hogg. Bradford on Avon received a Silver Gilt Award. Jennie reports that they spent some time talking to the judges and are now confident that we can go for a gold award next year. There were two speakers who talked through how they set up their gardens, one on the Scilly Isle of Tresco. The other was an organiser of the Chelsea Flower Show. Jennie says that she learnt a great deal from the experience which can be put to good use in the town next year.

Sunday 6th November – I am due to attend the Bradford on Avon Lions' 52nd Charter Anniversary Lunch.

I would also like to report that the Town Council has recently received a gift of a plaque from the Mayor of Tubas, following a visit by the BoA Friends of Palestine group. This is gratefully received by us as a recognition of the friendship link formed between our two towns in March 2020. It will be displayed in the Town Council office and I will write a letter of thanks on behalf of the Council.

Looking ahead, I'd like to make a special mention of Remembrance Sunday on November 13th. The restoration works have now been completed in this centenary year of the memorial being placed in Westbury Gardens. I look forward to seeing all the organisations represented at the ceremony. This year we will also be joined by a representative of our local Ukrainian residents who will be laying a wreath on their behalf.